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U.S. Department of the Interior

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Everglades National Park News Release

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Flamingo Potable Water System Improvements - No Significant Environmental Impact

Everglades National Park, FL: The National Park Service has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Flamingo Water System Improvement project. Acting Southeast Regional Director Tom Brown approved the FONSI based on the environmental assessment recommended by Everglades National Park Superintendent Maureen Finnerty. With the environmental assessment and associated compliance completed, improvements to the Flamingo potable water system should begin in November 2002.

Of the two alternatives considered in the environmental assessment, the approved action includes a number of steps to improve the potable water system at Flamingo. The preferred alternative consists of plugging and abandoning the existing (shallow, freshwater) wells and 16-mile transmission line, drilling two new (deeper, saltwater) wells near the existing water treatment plant, installing a reverse osmosis treatment system in the water treatment plant, and replacing the distribution system on an as needed basis. Brine concentrate from the water treatment plant will be piped to the percolation pond near the wastewater treatment plant. A percolation pond is a constructed holding area where reject water infiltrates into the ground, eliminating surface run-off. When the transmission line from the existing wells to Flamingo is abandoned, water from that source will no longer be available at the West Lake comfort station. A small pumping system will be installed to draw surface water from the lake to use for toilet flushing. No treated or potable water will be available at the West Lake comfort station.

The federally funded project will ensure a safe and adequate long-term supply of potable water for visitors and park employees. It will also result in negligible to minor, long-term beneficial impacts to several resources including water quality and hydrology, wetlands, wildlife and vegetation. The project will have no detectable impacts to cultural resources and will have short and long-term beneficial impacts on the visitor experience.

For more information about this project or to obtain a copy of the FONSI, contact Everglades National Park at (305) 242-7700 or visit our website at www.nps.gov/ever/planning/

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